


The Westminster Specialist College – Careers Programme 2023/2024





Our Careers programme is mapped to the Eight Gatsby Benchmarks



Our career programme is mapped to The Eight Gatsby benchmarks of Good Career Guidance
1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance


The Westminster Specialist College Careers Programme

Aims – To equip students with the skills, knowledge and confidence to be successful and independent in the world of work and the world around them.

Activity	Description of Activities	Impact	Gatsby Benchmark / Benchmarks Covered
<p>Career Fairs. Skill shows and apprenticeship conferences</p>	<p>Throughout the academic year, students at our college have valuable opportunities to engage with various careers fairs. These events serve as platforms for students to gain insights into their future steps and gather essential information about potential career paths.</p> <p>Two notable careers fairs scheduled for this academic year are the Westminster Special School Futures Expo and Inspiring The Black Country. These events are designed to offer students a diverse range of perspectives and opportunities to explore.</p> <p>Moreover, our college takes pride in the active involvement of students in representing the institution during these events. They eagerly participate in the career fairs, manning stands and showcasing the college's commitment to empowering students in making informed decisions about their future careers. By fostering these connections with different careers fairs and encouraging student representation, we aim to inspire and equip our students for their journey beyond the Westminster College.</p>	<p>Increased student awareness of variety of educational pathways and careers available within the local area, nationally and within key areas – Informed decision making - Students are exposed to a broader range of careers and educational opportunities, Increased awareness helps students align their interests, passions, and skills with potential careers, Increased awareness can empower students by providing them with a sense of purpose and direction.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8</p>

<p>Workplace Visits and Encounters</p>   	<p>The college leverages its robust network of business partnerships to facilitate student visits to various workplaces. Throughout this academic year, students will have the opportunity to visit the following organisations:</p> <p>The Grand Theatre</p> <p>Midland Metro Alliance</p> <p>McDonald's</p> <p>KPMG</p> <p>Higgs</p> <p>Savills – Merry Hill Shopping Centre</p> <p>Network Rail – Grand Central</p> <p>Cottage Delight Ltd</p> <p>Davenports</p>	<p>Students develop an understanding of the workplace and the skills required for different sectors and industries. - Students gain insights into the skills necessary for specific industries and job roles, Understanding the skills required in various sectors allows students to focus on developing relevant competencies, Students become better prepared for the workforce by acquiring the skills, knowledge, and behaviours expected in different industries and Students are better prepared to seek internships, paid work, or placements in various industries.</p>	<p>1, 4, 5, 7</p>
<p>Project Search and Supported Internships</p> 	<p>In September 2022, the school successfully initiated its Project Search programme in collaboration with DPD and The DFN Foundation. This initiative involves students participating in supported internships at DPD, under the guidance of a lead tutor from the college and a job coach from Sandwell Local Authority. Throughout the programme, students will engage in a variety of roles at DPD.</p> <p>Building on the success of this program, in 2023, we expanded our supported internship offerings by partnering with a second host employer—the esteemed Sandwell and Birmingham NHS. This expansion reflects our commitment to providing diverse and valuable opportunities for our students to gain real-world experience and contribute to their personal and professional growth.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>Students access the workplace developing employability skills - students accessing the workplace and developing employability skills gain practical experience, industry knowledge, professional networks, and increased confidence, making them more competitive and prepared for successful entry into the workforce. Exceptional performance during work placements can lead to job offers from the same organisation or industry</p>	<p>3,4,5 and 6</p>

<p>Access to Career Office and in school level 6 careers advisor</p> <p>Annual Reviews</p>  <p>Sukhie Sandhu Level 6 Careers Adviser</p>	<p>Students at our college have invaluable access to a Level 6 qualified careers advisor, providing essential guidance for their transition into the next phase of their journey. Our dedicated professional facilitates annual reviews, aiding students in comprehending specialised employment routes such as Supported Internships, Traineeships, Apprenticeships, and Supported Employment.</p> <p>To ensure a structured approach to career development, each student is equipped with a personalised careers action plan. This plan undergoes annual updates during their academic year, aligning with their annual review. Moreover, students are assigned specific actionable tasks as part of these action plans, fostering a proactive approach towards achieving their career aspirations.</p>	<p>Increased student awareness of variety of careers available within the local area, nationally and within key areas . Students also aware of their entitlement to CEIAG at The Westminster School - career advice is instrumental in helping our students make informed decisions, develop necessary skills, build confidence, and navigate the complex landscape of careers. It contributes to a fulfilling and successful life after college.</p>	<p>2, 3, 8</p>
<p>Skillsbuilder</p> 	<p>At our college, students' progress and development are evaluated using the comprehensive SkillsBuilder framework. This assessment process involves benchmarking students at the outset of the academic year, assigning scores based on their performance in the following vital areas:</p> <p>Speaking: Assessing their ability to communicate effectively and articulate ideas.</p> <p>Listening: Evaluating their attentiveness and capacity to comprehend and engage with information.</p> <p>Staying Positive: Gauging their resilience, optimism, and ability to maintain a positive outlook even in challenging situations.</p> <p>Aiming High: Analysing their ambition, goal-setting, and determination to strive for excellence.</p>	<p>Increased understanding and necessity for, employability skills. Improved skills in employment readiness. Improved skills in employment readiness, e.g. communication (written and verbal), reasoning skills, etc – Enhanced Job prospects – Students with strong employability skills are more attractive to employers. They have a higher likelihood of securing employment and can often choose from a wider range of job opportunities. Increased employability - Strengthening employability skills ensures that students are better prepared and equipped to meet the demands of the job market. This leads to increased employability</p>	<p>1, 3</p>

	<p>Leadership: Assessing their capability to guide and influence others positively.</p> <p>Teamwork: Evaluating their collaboration and cooperation skills within a group setting.</p> <p>Creativity: Gauging their innovation, originality, and ability to think outside conventional boundaries.</p> <p>Problem Solving: Assessing their aptitude for critical thinking and effective resolution of challenges.</p> <p>Regular assessment and monitoring using this framework help tailor educational approaches to each student's unique strengths and areas for improvement, ensuring a holistic and personalised experience.</p>		
<p>Social enterprise</p> 	<p>As an integral component of the students' Customer Services qualification, our college places great emphasis on hands-on experience and practical application. Students actively participate in managing and operating The WestminStore shop located in Blackheath. This immersive experience allows them to apply the principles and skills they've acquired throughout their coursework, providing valuable insights into customer service dynamics.</p> <p>Furthermore, students take charge of a tuck shop situated on The Rowley Campus, readily accessible to the college staff. This initiative not only serves as a practical training ground for the students but also enhances their understanding of customer preferences and service expectations in a real-world setting. It allows them to refine their customer service skills and further develop their ability to interact professionally with a diverse range of individuals.</p> <p>These practical ventures are designed to prepare students for successful integration into the world of customer service and retail.</p>	<p>Improved skills for employment and Recognising skills and qualities required for the retail industry. – Enhanced employability – Students with improved skills relevant to the retail industry are more likely to secure employment. They possess the competencies needed for various roles within the retail sector, making them attractive candidates to employers. Career opportunities in retail - A focus on skill improvement in the retail sector broadens the range of career opportunities available to students</p>	<p>1,3, 6</p>

Encounters with employers and employees



The college is committed to providing enriching opportunities for our students through Work Wednesdays and Future Fridays. During these designated days, we invite employers and employees to the school to deliver insightful career talks, engaging activities, and employability sessions to inspire and educate our students. This academic year, we have organized a series of talks from diverse professionals and organizations, including:

Voicesforchoices – Advocates for individuals with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in paid work.

McDonald's: Sharing experiences and insights from a prominent global employer.

STEM Ambassadors: Providing valuable knowledge and perspectives from the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics.

Network Rail: Offering insights into the world of rail infrastructure and related careers.

Gunning Marketing: Sharing expertise and experiences in the dynamic field of marketing.

GRAHAM: Providing insights into the construction and engineering sector.


Tilbury Douglas: Providing insights into the construction sector.


CyberQ Group: Delivering valuable information about careers in the cybersecurity domain and keeping themselves safe online


These talks and activities aim to broaden our students' horizons, expose them to diverse career options, and equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed decisions about their future career paths.


Students develop an understanding of the workplace and the skills required for different sectors and industries - Students gain insights into various career paths, allowing them to make informed decisions about their future based on their interests, skills, and the demands of different sectors and industries.

2,3,4,5

<p>Work Experience</p> 	<p>Every student at our college is provided with a valuable work experience placement opportunity as an integral part of their curriculum. This involves a minimum commitment of 2 days per week dedicated to gaining practical insights and skills in a professional work environment. During these work placements, students are carefully assessed using a work readiness rubric, combined with the SkillsBuilder framework.</p> <p>The assessment process is comprehensive, evaluating students' readiness for the workplace and tracking their progress in crucial areas such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and more. By utilising both the work readiness rubric and SkillsBuilder framework, we ensure a thorough evaluation that aligns with industry standards and focuses on the essential skills and competencies required for success in the world of work.</p> <p>These work placements serve as a bridge to help students comprehend the world of work and equip them with the skills necessary to embark on future internship programmes with confidence and competence. The hands-on experience gained during these placements is invaluable for their personal and professional growth, preparing them for a successful transition.</p>	<p>Increased understanding and necessity for, employability skills - Work experience provides students with practical skills and real-world knowledge, making them more attractive to employers and improving their chances of securing employment. Through work experience, students acquire and refine a diverse set of skills, including communication, problem-solving, time management, teamwork, adaptability, and industry-specific skills. Exposure to a work environment helps students gain clarity regarding their career aspirations, preferences, and the specific roles and industries they are interested in pursuing.</p>	<p>2, 3, 5, 6</p>
<p>Labour Market Information</p> <p>Your Future Black Country</p>	<p>At our college, ensuring that students are well-informed about the labour market and potential career opportunities is a priority. We strive to provide accessible and up-to-date labour market information to all students. This information is readily available in accessible formats, such as through the platform yourfutureblackcountry.com. Additionally, labour market information is prominently displayed throughout the college in workspaces and common areas, ensuring easy access for all students.</p> <p>To further enhance students' understanding of the labour market, we actively encourage and facilitate engagement with career fairs and employer visits. These opportunities allow students to explore various career options, interact with employers, and gain valuable insights</p>	<p>Student career planning increases as well as supporting more informed decisions about their future study and career options, as well as developing their employability skills and knowledge of the labour market Access information about career paths and the labour market to inform my own decisions on study options</p>	<p>2,3,7,8</p>

	<p>into the demands and trends of the labour market. By participating in such events, students can make informed decisions about their future careers.</p> <p>By integrating accessible labour market information and hands-on experiences, we empower our students to make informed decisions and prepare them for a successful transition into the world of work.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>Understand specialist routes of employment (e.g. Supported Internships, Traineeships, Apprenticeships & Supported Employment)</p>	
<p>Accreditations and Qualifications</p> 	<p>In the academic year 2023-24, students at our college are orking towards acquiring several valuable accreditations to enhance their employability and skill set. These accreditations encompass a range of areas vital for success in the workplace, providing a holistic approach to skill development. The accreditations include:</p> <p>AIM Employability Suite (Entry Level to Level 1)</p> <p>Core Unit: Action Planning for Success (incorporated into weekly review sessions)</p> <p>Speaking and Listening in the Workplace</p> <p>Writing for a Purpose in the Workplace</p> <p>Health and Safety in the Workplace</p> <p>Using ICT in the Workplace</p> <p>Accessing Financial Services</p> <p>Presenting Information about Self to an Employer</p> <p>Functional Skills English and Maths (Entry Level to Level One)</p> <p>Optional Qualifications Linked to Internship or Work Placements</p> <p>Food Hygiene</p>	<p>Students develop transferable skills from their customer service qualification, for example demonstrating positive communication, problem solving, supporting others. - Empowering students with increased employability, career advancement, skill development, and personal growth.</p>	<p>1,2,3</p>

	<p>Manual Handling</p> <p>Fire Safety</p> <p>First Aid</p> <p>National College Courses (as part of Independent Study Programme) Students may be allocated courses from the National College, enhancing their knowledge and expertise in specific areas related to their academic and career pursuits.</p> <p>These accreditations are meticulously designed to equip students with the essential skills, knowledge, and certifications required to thrive in the workplace and succeed in their chosen careers. The holistic approach ensures a well-rounded skill development, empowering students to confidently navigate the world of work.</p>		
<p>Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Employability Workshops</p>  <p>Department for Work & Pensions</p>	<p>The college collaborates with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to conduct termly workshops aimed at enhancing students' knowledge and understanding of crucial employability skills and interview preparation. These workshops are designed to provide students with valuable insights and practical guidance to help them succeed in the competitive job market. The focus areas of these workshops include:</p> <p>Key Employability Skills:</p> <p>Communication and interpersonal skills, Time management and organisational skills, Adaptability and flexibility, Problem-solving and critical thinking, Teamwork and collaboration</p>	<p>Students develop their knowledge of the recruitment process. Students develop the skills to be successful in the recruitment process – students will understand the recruitment process so are better prepared for each stage, leading to a more positive experience for success.</p>	<p>3,4 and 8</p>

	<p>Skills for Interviews (Including Mock Interviews):</p> <p>Techniques for effective interview preparation, Answering common interview questions with confidence and clarity, Body language and non-verbal communication during interviews</p> <p>Personal Presentation:</p> <p>Dressing for success and professional attire, Grooming and personal hygiene in a professional setting, Creating a positive first impression through appearance, Confidence-building techniques for effective personal presentation</p> <p>These workshops aim to equip students with the necessary tools and knowledge to excel in job interviews, present themselves professionally, and demonstrate the skills and qualities employers seek in potential candidates. Mock interviews provide a hands-on opportunity for students to practice and refine their interview skills, boosting their confidence and readiness for real-world employment opportunities.</p>		
<p>CV and Marketing themselves – Naturally Talented me</p> 	<p>As part of our college curriculum, we are excited to introduce the Naturally Talented Me portal to all students. This platform will serve as a valuable tool for students to showcase their unique talents, attributes, and capabilities through a personalised 3-dimensional SeeME Profile.</p> <p>The SeeME Profile is designed to provide a comprehensive and authentic representation of each student, allowing potential employers to gain deeper insights into the real person behind a job application. Students will have the opportunity to:</p> <p>Showcase Talents and Strengths: Students can highlight their unique abilities, skills, hobbies, and strengths, providing a well-rounded view of their potential contributions.</p>	<p>Students develop the skills to be successful in the recruitment process. Improved skills for employment. Recognising skills and qualities - a crucial tool in our student's job search process, providing a snapshot of a student's skills, qualities, qualifications and experiences. It will influence our students first impression on employers, their ability to secure interviews, and ultimately their chances of landing a job.</p>	<p>2,3,4</p>

	<p>Demonstrate Passion and Commitment: By presenting their interests and passions, students can convey their dedication and enthusiasm for specific fields or activities.</p> <p>Display Soft Skills and Interpersonal Qualities: The profile allows students to exhibit important soft skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership, and adaptability, giving employers a glimpse into their interpersonal capabilities.</p> <p>Present Academic and Professional Achievements: Students can include their academic accomplishments, projects, internships, and any other relevant experiences that demonstrate their expertise and growth.</p> <p>This initiative aims to empower students to present themselves authentically and comprehensively to potential employers. The SeeME Profile will serve as a powerful tool in the job application process, enhancing students' opportunities for success in the world of work</p>		
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